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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/690,102	10/21/2003	Yung-Lin Lin	O2MICRO 02.07 DIV3	3745

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EXAMINER

HAN, YOUNGHUIE JESSICA

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2838

DATE MAILED: 04/09/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/690,102	LIN ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Y. J. Han	2838	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 29-34 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 29-34 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. Claims 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

There are two periods in claim 29.

In claim 29, “step-up transformer” lacks antecedent basis from the specification.

Specification

2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

There are numerous typographical errors in the specification—“and/or or” on page 15, line 1; “encorporated” on page 15, line 13.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nalbant (5,615,093) in view of O'Neill (6,198,236) and Ehrenhardt et al (6,640,271).

Nalbant discloses the invention substantially as claimed including cold cathode fluorescent lamp (lamp 50), inverter circuit (60) generating an AC signal to power cold cathode

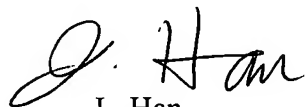
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fluorescent lamp (CCFL), and an inverter (integrated circuit controller 52) adapted to generate a plurality of signals to drive the inverter circuit. However, Nalbant does not disclose an input pin configured to receive two input signals and a multiplexer circuit to direct both input signals to its corresponding circuit. O'Neill clearly teaches that the use of a plurality of signals for controlling the lamp ON and OFF operation and the dimming of the lamp is well known in the art. O'Neill discloses a DC/AC inverter (100) including a plurality of power switches (switching regulator 124) for converting a DC signal to an AC signal, a step-up transformer (transformer 140) receiving the AC signal and generating a stepped-up AC signal, and an inverter controller (114) adapted to generate a plurality of signals to drive the plurality of power switches, the controller having at least one input pin (FB) configured to receive two or more input signals, each the input signal supporting an associated function of the controller. Fluorescent lamp drive circuit provides a first continuous drive signal over a first (high) range of lamp intensity and a second PWM drive signal over a second (low) range of lamp intensity. Further, Ehrenhardt et al teaches that it "is well known to those in the art, additional components such as multiplexers could be included in the addressing and data buses." (column 2, lines 39-41) Thus, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to employ the pin multiplexing and pin multitasking techniques in Nalbant, as taught by O'Neill and Ehrenhardt et al, in order to reduce the pin count and to provide a system "for controlling the intensity of a fluorescent lamp without reducing the lamp's lifetime."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Y. J. Han whose telephone number is 571-272-2078. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 5:30am-2:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Sherry can be reached on 571-272-2084. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Han', is positioned above the printed name.

J. Han
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2838